10. Briefly describe the results of coordination with local units of government.

a. Identify local units of government contacted and provide the date coordination was initiated.

Government	Date of Coordination m/d/yyyy
St. Croix County	01/22/2004
Village of Roberts	01/22/2004
Town of Warren	01/22/2004
Town of Richmond	01/22/2004
City of New Richmond	01/22/2004
West Central Regional Planning Commission	01/22/2004

b. Describe, briefly, the issues, if any, identified by local units of government during the public involvement process.

- Safety for all types of transportation
- Community development
- Village of Roberts economic vitality

c. Briefly describe how the issues identified above were addressed. Include a discussion of those that were avoided as well as those that were minimized and those that are to be mitigated. Include a brief discussion of proposed mitigation, if any.

The preferred alternatives for WIS 65 project corridor Section 1 and Section 2 provide the best balance in addressing the concerns voiced by local government and residents. In addition to local government involvement, they were also selected after extensive public involvement.

Section 1 (South Section)
The Section 1 South Realignment Alternative A-2 seeks to balance the concerns voiced by local government in the following ways:

- Bypassing the Village of Roberts provides the opportunity for safe transportation and efficient operations for all transportation modes.
- The Section 1 South Realignment Alternative A-2 does not sever or segment the community. The alternative closely follows the route proposed in the Robert – Warren Comprehensive Plan and will provide a barrier to separate proposed / planned residential development from commercial and industrial development.

- Section 1 South Realignment Alternative A-2 provides a good opportunity to maintain the economic vitality of the Village of Roberts. Although WIS 65 traffic will be given the option to bypass Roberts, traffic will have the opportunity to access the Village and its businesses if desired.

North Section (Section 2)

The Section 2 preferred alternative, an on-alignment four-lane enhanced expressway, attempts to provide a safe transportation facility for vehicles while minimizing impacts to farms, residences, and environmentally sensitive areas by remaining on-alignment.

WisDOT coordinated with the City of New Richmond and the Town of Richmond to develop a local road network that will operate in conjunction with the planned WIS 65 enhanced expressway. This coordination will allow planned development to proceed in areas that will not be impacted by the future construction of WIS 65.

TRAFFIC SUMMARY

	ALTERNATE	A - 2	On-Alignment		
	SEGMENT TERMINI	Section 1, I-94 to 110th Ave	Section 2, 110th Avenue to New Richmond		
TRAFFIC VOLUMES Existing	**ADT Yr.** 2004	10,300	10,200		
Existing Plus 10 yr.	**ADT Yr.** 2015	14,300	12,100		
Design Year	**ADT Yr.** 2025	18,400	13,900		
	DHV Yr. 2025	2,610	1,975		
TRAFFIC FACTORS	**K_{30}**	11.2	11.2		
	D (%)	0.62	0.62		
	T (% of ADT)	5.3	5.3		
Design Year	**T (% of DHV)**	4.3	4.3		
	Level of Service[1]	A	A		
SPEEDS Existing	**Posted**	25 – 55	55		
Design Year	**Posted**	65	65		
	Project Design Speed	70	70		
OTHER (specify)	**P (% of ADT)**	14.2	14.2		
	K (% OF ADT)				

ADT = Average Daily Traffic
DHV = Design Hourly Volume
$K_{30,100}$ or % = K_{30} = Rural, K_{100} = Urban, % = ADT in DHV
D = % DHV in predominate direction of travel
T = Trucks
P = % ADT in Peak hour
K_8 = % ADT occurring in the average of the 8 highest consecutive hours of traffic on an average day. (Only required when a carbon monoxide analysis must be performed per Wisconsin Administrative Code - Chapter NR 411.)

[1]Level of Service during the design year assuming the higher growth rate.
Values are the highest in the stated project segment.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Indicate whether the issue listed below is a concern for the proposed action or alternative. If the issue is a concern, explain how it is to be addressed or where it is addressed in this environmental document.

1. Stimulation of secondary environmental effects.

☒ No - Substantial secondary environmental effects will not be stimulated.
The text below contains a discussion of the project's influence on secondary development and a discussion of induced traffic projections for project alternatives.

☐ Yes - Stimulation of substantial secondary environmental effects will occur. Explain or indicate where addressed.

This project will stimulate two different avenues of secondary effects. Corridor preservation itself will influence land use changes. Then implementation of the preferred alternative will have another set of land use effects. This document focuses on the effects of implementing the preferred alternative, yet the document briefly describes some possible secondary effects of corridor preservation.

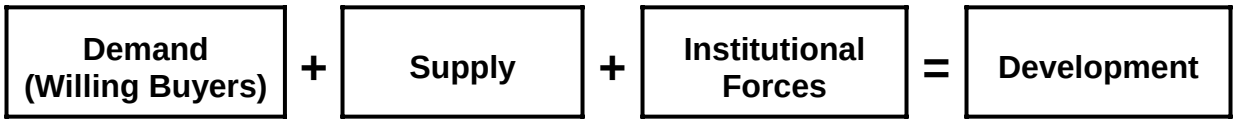
A. Secondary Effects of Corridor Preservation

Secondary effects are impacts that are not directly caused by an action, yet may result indirectly from an action. Preserving a WIS 65 corridor through zoning or official mapping will influence land use changes near the corridor. Because the zoning and mapping will be intended to prevent development within the corridor, land owners will be less likely to construct new structures within or adjacent to the preserved corridor. The corridor location will reduce the options land owners have with their property. Also, because the bypass alignment severs properties, the corridor may alter the location and shape of development when it occurs. This may slightly increase infrastructure costs associated with development and delay development. Together these effects may slow the conversion of agricultural parcels to developed parcels until the preferred alternative is constructed.

B. Transportation's Role in Secondary Effects

Secondary effects in this document are defined as environmental effects to land use indirectly enabled by an improvement action. Examples of secondary effects include residential, office, commercial, and industrial development. When an improvement action enables secondary development, it does not directly cause the development, but along with other factors, it helps to provide more opportunities for development.

Many studies have been performed investigating the role of transportation in secondary development and land use. Most of these studies, while linking transportation improvements to development and land use, vary in their opinions of how substantially highway improvements influence land use. Transportation improvements are one of many factors that influence development. Other factors include land availability, zoning compatibility, and economic vitality. This relationship may be stated another way. In order for the development to occur, development demand, supply, and institutional forces must come into accord. Specifically, a willing property owner/seller must be economically and legally matched with both an interested property buyer/developer and a government entity that will permit (through zoning and land division authority) the development to occur. Highway improvements (as well as all other forms of transportation and communication improvements) tend to increase the supply portion of this equation by improving the accessibility of property. The following equation explains this process:



Influences to Equation

Economic Vitality Housing Supply Buyer Preferences Property Attractiveness Community Preferences	Land Availability Land Cost Property Accessibility (Transportation)	Land Controls Land Use Plans Zoning Regulations Subdivision Regulations	Commercial, industrial and residential buildings

Demand and institutional interests must respond to this supply for development to occur. If they do not, development will not occur.

Currently, all the factors necessary for development (demand, supply, and institutional forces) are present in the WIS 65 corridor. Area zoning, subdivision regulations, and land use plans presently allow substantial amounts of residential, commercial, and industrial development to occur. Because other factors necessary for development are present, this WIS 65 improvement may enhance, enable, or influence development opportunities. The mechanisms by which this might occur are discussed in the following paragraphs.

1. Commuter-Related Development

One way in which highway improvements stimulate development is to provide convenient and safe commuting to employment centers located outside of the immediate area, such as the Minneapolis/St. Paul and Eau Claire metropolitan area. Much of the residential development in St. Croix County results form land use policies in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and the relatively accessible property in St. Croix County.

2. Development Related to Local Economic Vitality

A second way highway improvements stimulate development is by improving access, safety, or convenience, thereby attracting new development into the area. An example would be industries that consider such features a prerequisite for locating facilities. Robert's proximity to I-94 and its location in relation to Minneapolis/St. Paul help it compete with other communities as it seeks to attract industries.

The extent to which transportation improvements facilitate development with this mechanism is less dramatic than with the previously discussed commuter access-related mechanism. However, by stimulating the area's economy, this transportation improvement project will enable or facilitate secondary development. As area industry has a faster, more efficient highway linking it to the State and National Transportation System (via I-94), the improved transportation linkage may make the Roberts area more attractive for new industry that have particular location requirements. An improved highway may also enable the tourist industry to continue growing without the detractor of highway congestion.

C. <u>WIS 65's Role in Secondary Development</u>

The Wisconsin DOT in their Technical Reference Document for Indirect and Cumulative Effects Analysis for Project-Induced Land Development advocates a seven-step process shown in

Figure E.I-1. The following paragraphs briefly go through the process shown in this graph to summarize some of the secondary effects that could be enabled by the WIS 65 project.

I. What Area is Being Studied?

The area being studied includes the municipalities surrounding the Robert's area, specifically the Village of Roberts, the Towns of Richmond and Warren and the City of New Richmond. All are located in St. Croix County.

II. What is Going On in the Area Now?

St. Croix County is experiencing substantial population growth and coupled with it is a substantial increase in housing units constructed.

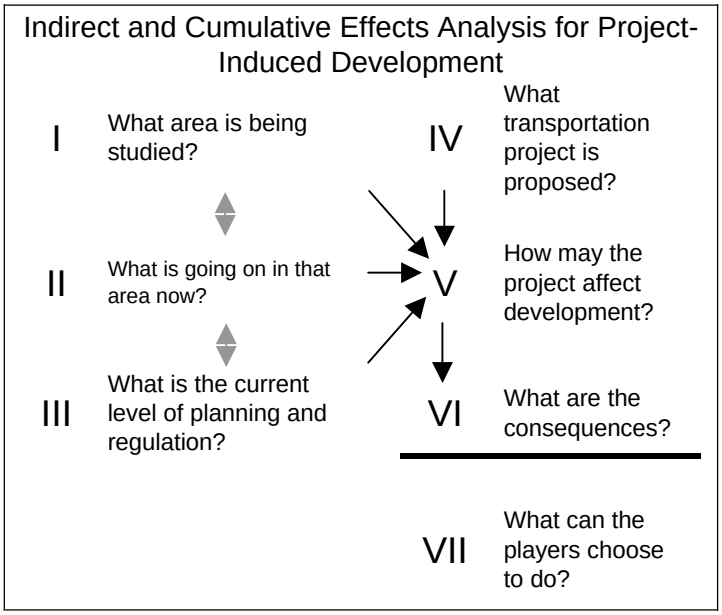


Figure E.I-1 Secondary Effect Study Process

Figure E.I-2 illustrates St. Croix County housing unit and population growth and compares it with Wisconsin growth from 1980 to 2000.

2005 population estimates indicate that St. Croix County is the fastest growing county in Wisconsin in terms of percentage. Between 2000 and 2005, population growth is estimated to grow at 19.84 percent; the next fastest growing county in Wisconsin is expected to grow at 7.45 percent in the same time frame.

In the immediate Roberts area, two main types of development are occurring. First, Roberts is having success in recruiting industry to locate in a business / industrial park on the east side of the Village.

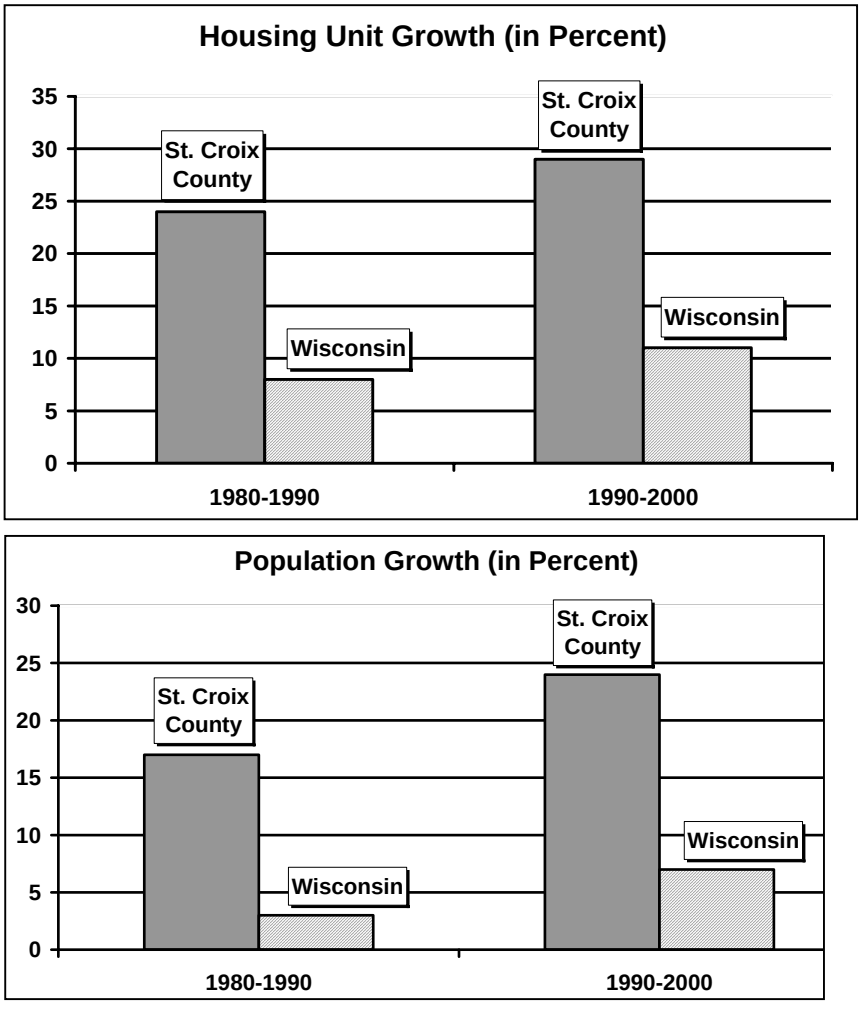


Figure E.I-2 St. Croix County Growth

Secondly, there is substantial residential growth in St. Croix County over the past decade. Much of this growth is the result of land use policies being implemented in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area. A considerable amount of this residential growth is occurring in rural subdivisions that do not have sewer service. Some of it is occurring as peripheral development to existing villages and town centers. Evidence of this can be seen in the ever-increasing number of houses being constructed in subdivisions in Roberts and the areas along the project corridor.

III. What is the Current Level of Planning and Regulation?

The Village of Roberts and the Town of Warren created the *Roberts – Warren Comprehensive Plan* in 2002. This plan addressed the concern of growing urban development pressure from the Twin Cities region and its relationship with St. Croix County and the communities of Roberts and Warren. The plan is assessed the following categories as they related to past impacts and future growth:

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Public Facilities
- Transportation
- Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Implementation

A significant part of the *Village of Roberts – Town of Warren Comprehensive Plan* as it relates to this Environmental Assessment is the Future Land Use Map, which is presented on page 18. The map defines a "Future STH 65 East Arterial Corridor", which Section 1 South Realignment Alternative A-2 closely follows. This corridor is used in the *Comprehensive Plan* to define an Urban Growth Area for the area.

IV. What Transportation Improvement is Being Proposed?

This document is proposing a four-lane limited access highway bypass of the Village of Roberts and a four-lane high speed facility north of Roberts to the City of New Richmond. Specific characteristics of the alternative are described in more detail in Basic Sheet 3. The improvement will provide an incremental increase in accessibility to IH 94 and the Minneapolis/St. Paul and Eau Claire metropolitan areas. The project extends the higher speed travel available on IH 94 onto the WIS 65 corridor.

V. How May the Project Affect Development?

- Industry

  Industrial growth and development in the Roberts area may occur at a slightly higher rate when this project is implemented because it provides better access to IH 94. This could make the Roberts community more attractive for industry, as well as other business types.

- Residential

  Substantial residential development is already occurring in St. Croix County as a result of land use policies in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. Sufficient access and capacity already exists on the IH 94 corridor to allow these residential development trends to continue. Yet as this improvement incrementally improves access to these metropolitan areas, so it will also help enable continued residential development.

The preferred alternative proposes a bypass along the east side of Roberts. Over the years this may encourage more residential development to occur on the Village's west side, away from the bypass. Additionally, sometimes a limited access highway located on the periphery of an urban area can act as a boundary – delaying development on the other side of the boundary. In these cases, development tends to stay within the boundary until available, developable sites are exhausted.

- Commercial

The amount of commercial development will grow in response to area population increases. This commercial development tends to be proportionate to increases in the consumer base. The location of some of this commercial development may change with the implementation of the preferred alternative. Businesses that rely on highway exposure for patronage, such as gas stations, may relocate to interchanges on the bypass facility. This may cause some commercial businesses that are located on the current WIS 65 highway inside Roberts to relocate to the quadrants of the future WIS 12 east interchange on the east side of Roberts.

- Induced Traffic

Another common secondary effect not associated with development is induced traffic. Induced traffic often is classified in two parts: demand transfer, such as changing routes and travel times and net increase in demand, i.e., driving more or farther. Demand transfer often may have positive effects, such as reducing the amount of traffic diverting through neighborhood streets. Increased demand can be associated with decentralization, increased fuel consumption, and more emissions.

When capacity is added to a highway facility, people may change their destination choices, such as job and residence locations. Because added capacity often reduces congestion, travelers select different origins and destinations than in the congested roadway situation. This can lead to decentralization.

Transportation capacity increase is one factor that influences destination choices. Other factors, such as land use policies, housing costs, and regional growth, also have great influence. In the very long term, highway capacity additions may play a part in lower urban densities, more auto-oriented urban design, and higher auto ownership and hence more total travel than would have been the case without capacity increases. Land use policies influence these results as well. Yet some research has found that even with strong land use policies that discourage low-density development/high auto ownership, auto travel growth remains highly dependent on socioeconomic and demographic change. In regions with strong land use policies in place, substantial population growth is coupled with substantial new highway travel. Future development along the WIS 65 corridor is expected to produce higher traffic growth rates with or without the proposed action.

VI. What are the Consequences?

The most likely effects of the new facility would be a slight increase in the residential development rate inside Roberts and along the WIS 65 corridor north of Roberts. Residential development inside Roberts will occur at higher densities and therefore will consume less land and resources. Residential development north of Roberts will have less density, a more rural character, and probably consume more land and resources. Possible effects could include:

- Consumption of farmland for residential development.
- Decentralization of housing into less dense development patterns.
- Consumption and/or fragmentation of environmental corridors by residential development.

There are other effects that are described in the preceding paragraphs. These include the relocation of highway-oriented commercial establishments and the possible increase in residential development on the west side of Roberts.

VII. What can the Players Choose to Do?

There are a variety of land use planning tools that can be implemented to capitalize on the opportunities, yet minimize the threats and weaknesses. Many of these tools are components of a comprehensive plan as defined by the smart growth legislation. These tools include the following:

1. Adopt Modern Zoning Standards

   Adopting strategic amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map will help locate land uses where they are desired within the community and ensure they are designed in a manner that forwards community objectives. For example, establishing and complying with a zoning map can keep commercial land uses inside Roberts from relocating to the quadrants of an interchange.

2. Foster Cooperative Intergovernmental Relations

   Communities planning jointly for area growth can help focus development in appropriate locations. These arrangements can keep development from playing one community against another. Joint planning arrangements include boundary agreements and exercising extra territorial zoning. Under Wisconsin Statues, intergovernmental agreements can be binding on the actions of future elected bodies for periods of up to twenty years. Hundreds of such agreements are in place all around the state.

3. Implement Community Character through Zoning Standards

   The character and type of development enabled by regional transportation improvements can be largely influenced by zoning standards. Examples of this include:

   - Zoning district mix – Character of a community is affected by where and how certain land uses are allowed.

   - Landscaping zoning standards – Many communities are using a point-based system to insure that developers include a desired amount of landscaping in their site plans. Different land uses require a certain number of “points” based on the size of the development. Points are awarded for planting trees and shrubs depending on the cost of and size of the items chosen.

   - Lighting zoning standards – Impacts of lighting on surrounding neighborhoods and green spaces created by commercial and industrial developments can be controlled with zoning standards.

   - Signage zoning standards – Controlling the size of signage can reduce the impact of commercial and industrial development on the aesthetics of the community.

- Building exterior materials zoning standards – Controlling the materials used in construction of building exteriors can reduce the impact of commercial and industrial development on the aesthetics of the community.

- Big box development zoning standards – Controlling the location, site design, and appearance of "big box" development can reduce its impact on the community. Many communities around the state have adopted provisions for placing special development conditions on "big boxes." Some of these communities (such as the small interstate communities of Johnson Creek and Cottage Grove) apply these standards to buildings as small as 5,000 square feet of total floor area.

4. Provide and Maintain a Local Road Network

Communities should preserve the capacity and utility of the existing road network. Additionally, they should plan for future transportation needs as their communities respond to anticipated growth that will occur with or without this WIS 65 project. Long-range planning for local roadways should include arterials, collectors, and local roads. Often the roads along the section lines, or "mile roads", tend to become the future urban arterials. With the Transportation Plan element of a city comprehensive plan, it is often prudent to map out future right-of-way needs so the proper widths can be preserved as the land develops.

Officially Mapping components of the transportation plan is one of the most cost-effective planning tools available to the community. The official map can be very effective in preserving planned land uses. Generally, the Official Map is the main tool for implementing the Transportation Plan element of the comprehensive plan.

Official Maps, subdivision ordinances, and zoning ordinances can require that additional widths beyond the typical 66-foot right-of-way be donated back to the community by developers. Also, a grid network should be planned with roads that span the entire community.

5. Use Zoning Ordinances to Regulate Transportation Aspects of Site Design

Zoning ordinances can be written to preserve the transportation system. This delays the need for capacity improvements on both State and local roadways. Example standards include:

- Access control zoning standards – It's important to control the number and locations of new driveways, private drives, and public streets that developments will add on to arterials and other heavily traveled roads.

- Parking lot design zoning standards – For safety and traffic flow concerns, it is very important to control the locations and internal design of parking lots.

- Entry throat zoning standards – It's important to control the design of entry throats for different types of development to prevent vehicles entering the development from queuing on to the adjacent road. Larger developments and businesses with drive-through windows typically require longer entry-throat depths.

- Modern parking standards – These are recommendations that are used for the number of stalls each type of development must provide based on quantities such as the size of the building or the number of employees.

- Transportation impact analysis – Many communities are requiring that a Traffic Impact

Analysis be completed before approving development. Typically, communities are using a "trigger size" of between 5,000 and 10,000 square feet of total floor area.

2. Creation of a new environmental effect.

☒ No – A new environmental effect will not be created.

☐ Yes – The project will create a new environmental effect. Explain or indicate where addressed.

3. Impacts on geographically scarce resources.

☒ No – Geographically scarce resources will not be impacted.

☐ Yes – Impacts on geographically scarce resources will occur. Explain or indicate where addressed.

4. Precedent-setting nature of the proposed action.

☒ No – The proposed project does not have a precedent-setting nature.

☐ Yes – The proposed project has a precedent-setting nature. Explain or indicate where addressed.

5. The degree of controversy associated with the proposed action.

☒ No – The proposed action is not controversial or the level of controversy is low.

☐ Yes – The project has a high degree of controversy. Explain or indicate where addressed.

6. Conflicts with official agency plans or local, state, or national policies, including conflicts resulting from potential effects of transportation on land use and land use on transportation demand.

☒ No – No conflicts with any plans, policies, or land uses will result.

☐ Yes – Conflicts with plans, policies or land uses will result. Explain or indicate where addressed.

7. Cumulative environmental impacts of repeated actions of the type proposed.

☐ No – The proposed action will not contribute to cumulative environmental impacts of repeated actions.

☒ Yes – Cumulative environmental impacts will result from repeated actions of the type proposed. Explain or indicate where addressed.

<u>Farmland</u>

Because of the proximity of the WIS 65 project corridor to the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area and the existing socioeconomic climate, urban and residential development in St. Croix County has resulted in substantial farmland conversion. The American Farmland Trust identifies St. Croix County as having high quality farmland as well as high development pressure. The 1992 US Census of Agriculture showed a decline of 57,000 acres of farmland between 1978 and 1992. Correspondingly,

the Census showed a decline in the number of farm acres from 78 percent of the land in the county in 1978 to 66 percent in 1992.

If the preferred alternative were constructed in 2006, approximately 260 acres of farmland would be converted to highway right-of-way. However, because construction of the preferred alternative would not occur for more than fifteen years and because of the St. Croix County development trends, it is likely that a substantial amount of today's farmland will have a different land use at the time of construction. It is for these reasons that this Environmental Assessment (EA) is being completed.

Because land use in the WIS 65 corridor is likely to change before construction of the planned highway, an Agricultural Impact Statement has not been completed in conjunction with this EA. However, WisDOT will update and reevaluate this environmental assessment as construction becomes imminent. The document will evaluate the secondary and cumulative effects on agriculture and farmland at that time.

Wetlands and Stormwater

Many of the wetlands in the proposed WIS 65 corridor have already been affected by previous activities such as filling, stormwater runoff, and water level changes from past ditching and draining. These previous activities are associated with agricultural land use, residential development, and previous highway development.

The effects associated with the proposed WIS 65 highway project include some filling and stormwater runoff. Approximately 0.5 acres of wetland would be filled during project construction. Any filled wetland will be mitigated adjacent to the existing wetland or near the project corridor where possible. The resulting cumulative impacts will then primarily be associated with the quality of stormwater runoff. Stormwater management measures, including best management practices, will be implemented both during construction and for the long term.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

Identify and describe any commitments made to protect the environment. Indicate when the commitment should be implemented and who in WisDOT would have jurisdiction to assure fulfillment for each commitment.

A. General Economics	None.
B. Community & Residential	The goal of this Environmental Assessment (EA) is preservation of the future WIS 65 corridor. The EA seeks to identify the preferred future WIS 65 corridor to a level of detail sufficient to discourage or prohibit development within its limits. This will allow local governmental jurisdictions to minimize future community, residential, commercial, and industrial impacts of the improvement when it is constructed. WisDOT NW Region Planning will be the WisDOT liaison for the local officials.
C. Commercial & Industrial	See comments for **Community & Residential** above.
D. Agriculture	None at this time. Will be evaluated when EA is updated for construction.
E. Environmental Justice	See comments for **Community & Residential** above.
F. Wetlands	None beyond standard practice.
G. Streams & Floodplains	None beyond standard practice.
H. Lakes or Other Open Water	None beyond standard practice.
I. Upland Habitat	None beyond standard practice.
J. Erosion Control	See Factor Sheet.
K. Storm Water management	See Factor Sheet.
L. Air Quality	The project is exempt from permit requirements per Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter NR 411 criteria.
M. Construction Stage Sound Quality	To reduce the potential impact of Construction Noise, the special provisions for this project will require that motorized equipment shall be operated in compliance with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations relating to noise levels permissible within and adjacent to the project construction site. At a minimum, the special provisions will require that motorized construction equipment shall not be operated between 6 PM and 7 AM without prior written approval of the project engineer. All motorized construction equipment will be required to have mufflers constructed in accordance with the equipment manufacturer's specifications or a system of equivalent noise reducing capacity. It will also be required that mufflers and

	exhaust systems be maintained in good working order, free from leaks or holes. See the Air Quality Factor Sheet.
N. Traffic Noise	None at this time. Will be evaluated when EA is updated for construction.
O. Section 4(f) and 6(f)	Not Applicable.
P. Historic Resources	Not Applicable.
Q. Archaeological Resources	Not Applicable.
R. Hazardous Substances or UST's	None at this time. Will be evaluated when EA is updated for construction.
S. Aesthetics	None.
T. Coastal Zone	Not Applicable.
U. Other	None.